



Queer Talks
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Serving EMU and Ypsilanti since 1881

Gov. Whitmer signs new bills expanding birth control access

AnnaBelle Favre
News Reporter

On Jan. 25, 2025, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed sixteen bills aimed at expanding reproductive freedom, including House Bill 5436, which allows pharmacists to prescribe birth control.

Sponsored by State Representative Cara Hope, the bill permits Michigan pharmacists to prescribe various forms of hormonal birth control, such as patches, rings, pills, and emergency contraceptives. This legislation applies to all Michiganders, regardless of age or prior use of birth control.

In a statement Hope said, "This legislation is essential to protecting reproductive freedoms here in Michigan. Safely expanding who can prescribe and dispense contraception prescriptions ensures that people across the state can easily access this vital tool for family planning and hormonal regulation. I want to express

my gratitude to my colleagues in the Senate for their determination to get these bills passed."

Michigan is now the 31st state to allow pharmacists to prescribe birth control. To implement the bill, pharmacists must complete a certification course. When patients visit, they will complete a self-screening assessment to determine the appropriate contraceptive, with pharmacists offering referrals to primary care physicians when necessary.

"Right now, if you want to get most birth control pills, you have to make an appointment with your doctor, maybe take time off work or find child care to go into the office, pay your copay and after all that, you still have to go to a pharmacy to actually pick up your medication. Let's call it what it is: unnecessary government red tape that slows down busy Michiganders who are just trying to get through their to-do list," Whitmer said in a video on social media.

This new legislation also mandates that insurance providers who cover prescription drugs must include coverage for birth control obtained at pharmacies, a change set to take effect in April.

A major driving force behind these bills is Michigan's shortage of women's health specialists. A press release from Whitmer's office revealed that a third of Michigan's 83 counties lack OB/GYN specialists, making it difficult, if not impossible, for some residents to access necessary care.

"This shortage has negatively affected thousands of Michiganders, making it harder for them to access hormonal birth control. These bills increase access to safe, affordable birth control and recognize pharmacists as important members of a woman's health care team," Whitmer said.

Organizations like the Michigan Pharmacists Association, Planned Parenthood of Michigan, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have supported the bills,

while opponents included the Michigan Association of Health Plans.

College students, especially those in need of affordable and convenient contraception, will also benefit from the new law.

Student Daira Lloyd is a strong advocate for accessible birth control on and off campus.

"This [bill] is really important, because for people who don't have health insurance, it can be very expensive, and it takes a lot of time to go to the doctor," Lloyd said. "People shouldn't have to spend hundreds of dollars or even \$10 meeting with a doctor to get birth control prescribed when it can happen right at the pharmacy."

Lloyd is president of Eastern's Planned Parenthood Generation Action chapter. Through the organization, students can access free birth control, including emergency contraception, by messaging the group's text line or social media.

House Bill 5436 represents a

significant step toward improving access to reproductive health care in Michigan. By allowing pharmacists to prescribe birth control, this legislation removes barriers that often make obtaining contraception time-consuming and difficult, particularly for those who face challenges accessing medical professionals.

The new law addresses critical issues like the shortage of OB/GYN specialists and the burden of navigating healthcare bureaucracy, benefiting not only individuals in rural areas but also college students and those without health insurance. With broad support from advocacy groups and healthcare professionals, this bill is a victory for reproductive freedom, ensuring that birth control is more accessible, affordable, and convenient for all Michiganders. As the state continues to prioritize reproductive rights, the hope is that these changes will inspire similar efforts nationwide, making reproductive healthcare more inclusive and equitable for everyone.

BSU president Amiya Pillow talks Black History Month events

Asia O'Quinn
Staff Reporter

Amiya Pillow, senior and president of Black Student Union at Eastern Michigan University, shared her journey about discovering the organization, becoming president this year, and upcoming events for Black History Month.

Pillow, from Detroit, plans to graduate at the end of this semester with a degree in media studies and journalism. During her time at Eastern Michigan University she was a sisterhood scholar, which is a program for minorities. She climbed the ladder to being top dog of one of the first student organizations she joined, the Black Student Union. She said she loves taking on this

type of leadership role because she is never bored and knows there's always something that can be done.

As Pillow graduates this year, she hopes that the union will continue to flourish, in part because she found it in a resurrection state. She said she is excited to see what is in store for the union after handing her presidency to another member and would even plan to come back to help the new executive board with events.

Q: Why did you join the Black Student Union and what made you join?

A: I joined BSU during my sophomore year in 2022-23. That was the first year BSU came back on campus. I joined because many of my resident assistants and dorm members were on the executive board. I liked all the events they had for Black Welcome Week, so that's when I realized I wanted to join. I started going to the meetings, getting connected, and asking members what they needed help with.

Q: You mentioned you joined the Black Student Union when they came on campus, why were they gone?

A: BSU wasn't suspended, but after COVID-19 a lot of people in the organization had all graduated. There weren't many people on campus who knew about BSU. Specifically, a guy named Alfred, a resident assistant in my program, gathered five to six people who he felt would be a great fit on the executive board. He spent the whole summer talking to those people about what BSU was, why he wanted to bring it back on campus after COVID-19 and working with them the entire summer. After that summer, BSU started having events on campus and fall 2022 was the first time it was back on campus after COVID-19.

Q: How many events does the union have planned for Black History Month?

A: The first one we're doing is spades night with the National Pan-Hellenic Council, at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 3. Spades is a very popular game in the Black community. Some people know how

to play it, and some don't. We're teaching people how to play spades and playing card games all night. Following the spades night, we have the Detroit tour on Feb. 7, with Campus Life and CORE. We're going to tour the Motown Museum, a previous coffee shop during the '67 riots that is now a restaurant, and more. In collaboration with the Black Honors Student Organization, we're hosting an event called Breaking the Barrier where we have a healthy conversation with police officers while watching The Hate U Give. After that, we have Bae Goals on Wednesday, Feb. 12, we'll be talking about healthy relationships, love, and trivia.

Then finally we'll have our 10th annual Unity Ball on Feb. 21 to conclude the month and unite everybody for Black History Month. I'm excited about February, and I hope we have a big turnout at the events. All information regarding each event is on BSU's Instagram page @emu_bsu.

Q: Which event are you the most excited about?

A: I think I'm the most excited about the Unity Ball. We've been planning it since summer, and working hard behind the scenes to get all the funds so it could be a grand ball. I'm happy to see what every week brings because it's something different each time.

Q: Which event do you think will be the most impactful and encourage students to attend?

A: I feel like the Breaking the Barriers event along with the Black Honors Student Organization and the NAACP will be a big and nice event because we've never done or seen anything like that. At least for me, I haven't seen anything like that before on campus, but I think it's important to hold space for hard conversations with local police officers and for them to be respectful and genuine. With this event, people can learn from the discussions and apply to their real-life experiences. Everything for Black History Month from every organization is going to be nice and we can keep the Black excellence going all month.

Q: Are the union's Black History Month events excluded to Black people?

A: No, it's not only just Black people. Everyone can come, even the Unity Ball because that's the whole point of it where everyone on campus can come together. We personally invite all the student organizations to come out. We don't want it to just be Black people because that's who we see all the time. We want everybody united and for everyone to have a good time. The Unity Ball is the last day before spring break, so you might as well have a nice time then go on break.

Q: What was the journey like of becoming president of the Black Student Union?

A: I started as a general body member when BSU came back, I became treasurer my junior year, and then president this year as a senior. It was never my set goal to become president, but it wasn't something too farfetched either. I knew I wanted to be a part of the executive board somehow, that's why I became treasurer first. I was treasurer in high school for another organization I was in, so I had experience with it. This past year, my junior year, BSU's executive board was going through a situation where we didn't have all the people we were supposed to have. That allowed me to take the lead and envision what I wanted for BSU and what we could improve on. Then, once the executive board saw that I was stepping up, they said maybe you should run for president. And so, I did that. I was going up against someone else for president and at the last minute I said I don't think I'm going to do it anymore; I'll just be vice president because my opponent was a good candidate. The president at the time told me no, you need to be president; don't let your opponent discourage you just try. That's when I won the election. I already felt like I was in that leadership role because I planned events and showed up for everything. So that's when I thought I'd be capable of being president. The race was close because there weren't that many people in attendance.



The Eastern Echo

The Eastern Echo serves the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti-area communities as an independent student-operated newspaper. Founded in 1881 as The Normal News, The Echo distributes weekly printed editions on campus and throughout the surrounding community during the fall and winter academic semesters; and publishes year-round on the web. Contents are subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent of the newspaper.

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The Eastern Echo informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti community by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.

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Print editions published Tuesdays from late August to early May are available in racks or on tables in all academic buildings on the EMU campus, and at dozens of businesses in the community.





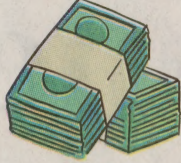

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CORRECTIONS

The Eastern Echo corrects mistakes. If we got it wrong, we want to make it right. Errors should be brought to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief by email: editor@easternecho.com

Weekly Calendar

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4	WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5	THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6	FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7	SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 9	MONDAY FEBRUARY 10
CONVERSATIONS FOR CLARITY WITH ABDU MURRAY STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM A 5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. 	INTERNSHIP FAIR STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM 1 P.M. - 5 P.M.  TRUEMU NIGHT WITH THE DETROIT PISTONS LITTLE CAESARS ARENA 7:00 P.M. 	HEALTH PROFESSIONS CAREER TALKS: PHYSICAL THERAPY MARSHALL BUILDING ROOM 108 11 A.M. - 12 P.M. 	BUDGET BASICS WITH SCOTT TEASDALE ZOOM CALL 11 A.M. - 12 P.M. 			ANALYSIS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF DAMAGE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE ANALYSIS ZOOM CALL 4 P.M. - 5 P.M. 

Scoop's Forecast

-1° 	-6°	Tuesday, Feb. 4
-2° 	-4°	Wednesday, Feb. 5
5° 	-6°	Thursday, Feb. 6
-1° 	-8°	Friday, Feb. 7
-1° 	-5°	Saturday, Feb. 8
1° 	-8°	Sunday, Feb. 9
-2° 	-9°	Monday, Feb. 10



EASTERN
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

GIVE invites college students to travel the world with purpose

AnnaBelle Favre
News Reporter

For many, college breaks offer the perfect time to travel, and GIVE Volunteers is making it easier for students to combine their passion for adventure with meaningful volunteer work.

GIVE Volunteers is an international organization dedicated to sustainable community development.

Carly Feil, Community Engagement Manager at GIVE, described the organization as an international initiative focused on sustainable development at the community level.

Through GIVE, volunteers from around the world engage in projects that align with the needs of local communities, ensuring that each project is both wanted and beneficial. This is achieved by working closely with community leaders and conducting thorough planning to ensure that the projects bring positive change.

GIVE organizes three types of projects: English education, eco-friendly infrastructure, and environment and wildlife conservation. The projects surrounding English education take volunteers to real schools to work as teaching assistants for English as a second language. The presence of a native English speaker enhances learning and encourages students to set realistic educational goals.

The eco-friendly infrastructure initiatives focus on building essential structures such as schools, homes for displaced families, agricultural learning centers, and freshwater systems. Volunteers also help create permaculture plots and suspension bridges: projects that empower communities with the resources they need to thrive.

Environment and wildlife conservation projects are centered around natural capital and preserving wildlife. The work that volunteers do partners with conservation organizations to take steps towards captive elephant welfare, sea turtle conservation, reforestation initiatives and wildlife rescue. Each of these types of projects allows volunteers to contribute in a way that aligns with their interests and passions while addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

GIVE Volunteers offers projects across the globe, with locations in places like Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Hawaii, Thailand, Laos, and the American Pacific Northwest. Trips typically last between 1 and 7 weeks and follow a structured daily schedule: a local breakfast, morning volunteer work, lunch within the community, and adventure or exploration time for the rest of the day.

There is always a GIVE guide with volunteers on these trips, so even

during time to explore, there should be no issues with navigation, finding entertainment, or getting lost. Spending true time in the community is what makes GIVE Volunteers different from other travel organizations.

"We don't do tourist trips," Feil said. "We are all about authentic cultural experiences that can change your worldview."

The adventures and explorations that volunteers get to experience include snorkeling, going to night markets, viewing the wildlife, local tours, cave exploration, ziplining, and many other local offerings.

Feil has seen every aspect of the organization firsthand. She started as a volunteer, became a guide, and is now the Community Engagement Manager at GIVE. She, along with two other organizers, continues to work as a guide to maintain a personal connection with the volunteers and to ensure the organization is meeting its goals.

All three of these team members attest that going on a trip with GIVE is life changing. Feil reflected on how her experience with GIVE shaped her future.

"I found GIVE in my freshman year [of college] and took action with them sophomore year," Feil said. "The trip changed my whole perspective and my career ideas. I was majoring in psychology, which was very broad, but I then learned I wanted to be a part of

something internationally."

Many volunteers find that their experience with GIVE not only enriches their understanding of the world but also fosters lifelong friendships with fellow volunteers and community members.

For students looking to gain more than just an adventure, GIVE offers opportunities to earn academic credit for their volunteer work. By enrolling in the eco-tourism course, students can participate in pre-trip projects as well as community dialogues, and reflective journaling during their trip. Upon returning, they complete a final project to share their experiences and insights.

GIVE's trips are designed to be rewarding, affordable, and accessible. The trip cost covers room and board, all meals, activities, and guide services. While flights are not included, GIVE's partner travel agencies help volunteers find the best airfare deals. The customer service team ensures volunteers are fully prepared, with all necessary paperwork and travel arrangements in place before departure.

Whether you're looking to make a meaningful impact on a global scale, gain new perspectives, or simply embark on an unforgettable adventure, GIVE Volunteers offers a unique opportunity for college students to do it all.

So, if you're considering joining a GIVE trip, visit givevolunteers.org.

What's the move? Feb. 4-10

Carol Detary
Staff Reporter

Check out this week's offerings of events on and around campus.

Curious about God? Have Some Questions For Clarity, Q&A with Abdu Murray - Feb. 4

Author Abdu Murray, president of Embrace the Truth International, visits Eastern Michigan University on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025 to offer a program where students can voice their honest questions. The Q&A is from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom A.

Internship Fair - Feb. 5

Looking for an internship? Students can meet with industry employers regarding internships for various majors during the Internship Fair scheduled from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025 in the Student Center Ballroom. The fair is open to students and alumni looking for internship opportunities. To attend, students must register on Handshake.

Dorm Room Cooking with Eagle Nutrition Services - Feb. 5

Eagle Nutrition Services offers cooking classes with tips and tricks for cooking healthy and delicious meals throughout the semester. This week, earn learning beyond the classroom credit and learn the basics of dorm room cooking in Rackham Hall 105 from 2 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025. The class includes easy recipes and opportunities to sample the food. Vegetarian options are included. The class is free, but pre-registration is required.

RecWellFest - Feb. 5

Recommit to personal well-being and find inspiration in activity during the festival at the REC/IM Building from 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025. The RecWellFest includes activities, workshops and exhibitors focused on physical and mental health. The programs and events include debunking common wellness myths.

TRUEMU Night with the Detroit Pistons - Feb. 5

The Detroit Pistons face the Cleveland Cavaliers at Little Caesars Arena for TRUEMU Night. Every ticket purchased includes a co-branded Pistons/EMU sweatshirt and a \$5 donation to the EMU Student Emergency Fund. Tickets are sold on Fevo-enterprise.com, and be sure to use code Collegenight265 to purchase tickets. The game starts at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025 at the Little Caesars Arena.

Health Professions Career Talks: Physical Therapy - Feb. 6

The Introduction to Exercise Science class includes guest speakers in various health profession fields, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and orthotics and prosthetics. The event is free and approved for LBC credit. The career talk will occur from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025 in room 108 of the Marshall Building.

Budget Basics with Scott Teasdale - Feb. 7

Wondering how to allocate a student income to cover all those things a student needs? Join Scott Teasdale, director of EMU's Office of Research Development and Administration, for a budget workshop from 11 a.m. to noon Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. The workshop provides an introduction to budgeting and will be conducted online in a Zoom conference call.

Analysis and the Philosophy of Damage for Cultural Heritage Analysis - Feb 10

A guest speaker will be joining via Zoom from Washington, D.C., to present this workshop on the philosophy of damage for cultural heritage. The event is approved for LBC credit. The Zoom conference call is scheduled for 4 to 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10.

Longtime Marvin's Marvelous Mechanical Museum to relocate



Max Taylor/The Eastern Echo

Lauren Holloway
News Reporter

Opened in 1980, Marvin's Marvelous Mechanical Museum is moving to a new location. The business has been in the same location for decades, but because of redevelopment plans in Farmington Hills, it must relocate.

The business was started by Marvin Yagoda in Tally Hall. After a trip to the food court with his family, Yagoda decided it was a good place to display some of his vintage items.

"My mom took me to Tally Hall (the first food court in the area) and thought what a great place for my dad to get

some of his collection out of the house" said Jeremy Yagoda, Marvin Yagoda's son.

The business grew until they were leasing three spaces within Tally Hall full of games. When the property was closed and redeveloped, Yagoda moved the museum into its own building. Now it will be moving for the second time into the Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield.

Marvin's Marvelous Mechanical Museum is an interactive, family-friendly experience. There's coin operated games, video games, collectors' items, movie posters, memorabilia, photo booths and rides. Admission is free and there's a cafe

with free Wi-Fi. Playing games earns tickets that can be traded in for prizes. The museum is also full of antiques and nostalgic like model airplanes and neon signs as well as t-shirts and other souvenirs.

The new space in Orchard Mall will give the business, now run by Jeremy Yagoda, room to expand. "We will almost be three times bigger," said Yagoda. He intends to add new machines and private rooms for birthday parties and other events. "I hope it will only continue to grow," said Yagoda.

Since its opening the museum has been a staple in the community. A fun activity for all ages, Marvin's

Marvelous Mechanical Museum offers engaging, vintage games.

"I think the response shows how much the community appreciates what my father started out of passion," Yagoda said.

The museum has also been recognized by media corporations such as; US Weekly, Bizarre Magazine, The World Almanac, Hour Detroit Magazine, The Metro Times Monthly, The Antiques Roadshow, WWJ and WJR AM News radio, and many more.

Open 365 days a year, the business hours are 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. on Sunday.

Get to know alum Sean Gray, one of EMU's new regents

Max Smith
News Reporter

Moments of self-awareness can be difficult to predict. Sean Gray was a parent himself before he realized he had dyslexia.

That realization took raising his own child, who struggles with the same learning challenges to take root. Those moments come wherever you are, whether you are ready or not. Those moments can define who you are, and depending on when you are in your life, be it as a child or even growing into adulthood at college. Sometimes, they completely change who you are.

It was when he was working on his bachelor's degree in business management that Gray realized that he needed to be moving with purpose in his life.

Before then I was kind of just going to class as best as I could, and then 9/11 happened while I was in undergrad," Gray said. "I woke up and realized I needed to get myself in gear and do

things."

From there, he did exactly that. He joined student leadership groups and filled a vacant seat in the student senate. He worked on the student government's business and finance committee. That committee taught Gray much about his fellow students.

"You learn so much about student needs and their funds when working in student government," Gray said.

Gray would make many connections with student organizations and their members while working on the committee. He still has some of the t-shirts some of the organization members gave him at the end of each year when they were turning in their receipts.

"There was one pair, I won't name names, but they were always really consistent and on time," Gray said.

Eventually, Gray would become Student Body President, joining the Board of Regents' Student Committee. The student government would serve as his proving ground for many of the skills, like lobbying, he would use

later in life while working as a small business consultant and for the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Now, Gray re-joins the Board of Regents, as an alumnus instead of as a student this year after his appointment by Governor Whitmer. He will serve on the faculty affairs and personnel and compensation committee, as well as be an auditor alongside University President James Smith.

After graduation, Gray worked as a small business consultant with Eastern Michigan University and the Michigan Small Business Development Center in Detroit. While working there, he met Wendy Thomas, who he credits as one of his strongest mentors as a young professional.

Gray also met his wife, who worked in the same building at the time. After eight years, Goldman-Sachs' 10,000 Small Businesses initiative hired him in 2014 to become their associate director in the Michigan chapter. Working out of and in partnership with Wayne State University, the investment fund provides a program as part of a larger

philanthropic effort from the bank that offers an educational course for small business owners.

Small businesses are near and dear to Gray's heart, and he has spent his career working with young entrepreneurs to fulfill their dreams of opening and sustaining a business. As a small business consultant, he worked to educate and mentor business owners as they navigated the difficulties involved.

"I always say that when you're going into small business, you're getting into a fight with a bear," Gray said. "And there's not always someone who is going to be there to hear you when that bear starts growling and scratching at you."

After five years working with Goldman-Sachs, Gray moved on to the US Small Business Administration. Gray started as a lender relations expert before becoming an economic development specialist for the rest of his three-year tenure there. As an economic development specialist, Gray worked to improve conditions and availability of funds to Michigan small businesses. Gray became vice president of small business services for the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation after leaving the U.S. Small Business Administration in 2022.

In his current position, Gray has worked for the past years to support the delivery and development of the District Business Liaison program, Motor City Match, BuyDetroit, and the Green Grocer project. Gray has also been working with the city of Detroit on the Detroit Legacy Small Business Project, which provides economic support for businesses that have been operating for 30 years or more in the city.

Gray's first order of business now that he's re-joined the Board is to re-learn how it operates. From there, he hopes to learn more about the students on campus and their financial needs as he hopes to serve them.

Gray wants to speak with students about how to best serve and deliver value for students' education at Eastern in the evolving educational landscape.

BSU - continued from page 1

There were probably 10 people who voted. My opponent ended up being vice president, but he stepped away for personal reasons. We were already friends, so he was OK with being vice president.

Q: What does the Black Student Union bring to benefit students or members?

A: BSU is here to create a safe space for black students and students of color, but really for black students to do things they want, reach goals, and connect people to the resources they need near or off campus. We work with Campus Life, CORE, and people on campus to reach other communities. I've always wanted people to come to our meetings and events and feel like they are with their family and close friends. I also want BSU to be a space where people can go to be empowered by each other.

Q: What do you love the most about being the organization's president?

A: My favorite thing is coming up with events for students that are fun but double as an educational event. It's hard coming up with events that are fun for college students, especially since we're on campus so we want to be respectful. I enjoy thinking about different things that we can do as a student organization. When we are in executive board meetings we talk through many things such as coming up with new events we've never done. Even if we try something and it doesn't work, it's constructive criticism of what we could do better the next time. I love seeing when something starts as an idea and then comes to life as an event. When we have a big turnout to our events, like the hustle class before homecoming weekend, that was fun. You see everybody there, everyone gets into their vibe, you see all your friends, and it's the same faces we see frequently. It's delightful seeing connections being built between everyone at one event.

Q: Is the union accepting new members and what are the requirements?

A: We are going to be accepting new members this semester. We haven't fully talked about how we want to do membership yet. We did take new members this past semester but, we may not give away shirts this time because we already did that. There are no requirements in joining besides being Black. If you're interested in joining, you can follow our Instagram @emu_bsu. We have a post stating requirements, such as a good standing GPA. We ask for members to attend our meetings to participate in executive board elections. Active members get

more perks compared to general members. For example, they don't have to pay for the Detroit tour because it's already covered from them paying their dues.

Q: What makes the Black Student Union stick out compared to other organizations?

A: I like the relationship we build within our members and executive board. BSU is a big organization because we cover all Black students. Members who paid dues, they actually come and show up because we build this close relationship. The executive board and active members, we're always together and it's an open space to talk about ideas they have for the organization. The amount of work we put in may not look like a lot on the surface, but behind closed doors we go through a lot for events to happen and connect with different people. I would say our work ethic and close bond with each other is up there because we work so hard. BSU feels like my life because I put so much effort into it.

Q: How often does the union give out scholarships?

A: This is the first year that BSU is doing our own scholarship. Last year we partnered with another organization on campus called Kings of Color. It was our first time doing the Unity Ball since we had been back from COVID-19, so we connected with Kings of Color because they were already established and already been planning big events. They gave away our scholarship last year, but this year we wanted to do it ourselves and raise money so it could come from BSU.

Q: What does the Unity Ball scholarship entail?

A: It's a 500- to 750-word essay describing what you have done in your community to make it stronger and what initiatives you put out in order to build your community up. It's required that you have a GPA of at least 2.5 and be in attendance at the Unity Ball. I'm excited to see who wins because we haven't gotten many applications and we're trying to give away good money. So I invite everyone to apply. The deadline is Feb. 14, a week before the Unity Ball, so we can review all the essay applications.

Q: Are you a member of any other student organizations?

A: I'm a member of Sistas That Care. I think I joined BSU and Sistas That Care at the same time during my sophomore year. Sistas That Care was a new student organization when I joined. I was a part of the first class of people I came in. I got involved in Sistas That Care the same way I did for BSU. All the founders of Sistas That Care were people that I was around, resident assistants or graduate assistants in my program. When I heard about it, I

knew it was something I wanted to do and started going to the meetings and events. I signed up to be a member with my roommate and we both got in. It was really fun. I love Sistas That Care

because it's like a sisterhood and we have a good time together. It feels like BSU, it doesn't feel like an organization because we always try to enjoy ourselves. I'm the community service chair for Sistas That Care, but besides that I was a member my sophomore and junior year.

Editor's note: Amiya Pillow also is a writer for The Eastern Echo.

WANT TO READ MORE?

READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE!



Chris Wiesehan's hire is the latest offseason move for EMU football

Hugh Thorp
Sports Reporter

The heart of the offseason is intact for the Eastern Michigan University Football program. The Eagle's latest move is hiring Chris Wiesehan as an assistant coach for the program, specifically an offensive line coach.

Wiesehan previously spent three seasons at Temple University in Philadelphia, where the Owls went 3-9 each season he was there as the offensive line coach. He was previously in the same position at Temple from 2014 to 2018 before he left for three years to go to Georgia Tech, being there from 2019-2021.

On the professional level of coaching, he was an assistant coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2005. The team made the playoffs that year but lost to the then-Washington Redskins, 17-10, in the wild-card game.

He was also an assistant for the CFL Winnipeg Blue Bombers from 2010 to 2011, working as the wide receivers coach.

Collegiately, the coach has worked at numerous places throughout his career, which started in 1994. The places he's coached at include Fort Hays State, Purdue, Notre Dame, Buffalo, Northern Illinois, James Madison, Syracuse, UCLA, Hawai'i Manoa, and Georgia Tech.

Wiesehan spent one year at Purdue

in 1996. Although he missed the opportunity to work with Hall of Fame quarterback Drew Brees, he worked with Matt Light during Brees' first year at Purdue in 1997.

Light played 11 seasons for the New England Patriots and made the Pro Bowl three times in his NFL career: 2006, 2007, and 2010. He was a key component on the offensive line when the Patriots beat the Rams, Panthers, and Eagles in Super Bowls 36, 38, and 39. He also played in Super Bowls 42 and 46, where the Patriots lost to the New York Giants.

Light was also a first-team all-pro in 2007, when the Patriots went 16-0. His last season with them was in 2011.

Wiesehan has coached numerous

NFL draftees, most notably Tyler Davis at Georgia Tech. Davis has played for the Jacksonville Jaguars, Indianapolis Colts, and Green Bay Packers.

Wiesehan grew up in the St. Louis metropolitan area and attended Wabash Valley College in Mount Carmel, Illinois. He was a wide receiver who played for 4,825 yards over four years.

His 31 seasons of coaching experience at all levels hope to boost an Eastern Michigan team that was 5-7 overall and 2-4 in MAC play in 2024. The Eagles lost their last five games to conclude the 2024 season and were not bowl-eligible for the first time in four seasons.

Eagle Sports Tips &

Tales:

Feb. 4-10

Elena Davis
Sports Editor

Brace yourself for an action-packed week as Eastern Michigan athletics kicks off February with a thrilling array of games and competitions! From heated basketball battles to high-energy track & field meets, swimming events, and lacrosse matchups, EMU athletes are primed to bring their best to the court, track, and field.

Whether you're in the stands in Ypsilanti or catching the action from home, here's your essential guide to the must-see events this week:

Men's Basketball vs Kent State

The men's basketball team starts the week with a crucial home game against Kent State at 6:30 p.m. in Ypsilanti. This will be a key matchup in the Mid-American Conference as the Eagles look to make a strong push in the standings.

Women's Basketball at Miami

On Feb. 5, the women's basketball team heads to Oxford, Ohio, for a 7 p.m. game against Miami. The Eagles will look to take down the RedHawks on their home court in this crucial conference game.

Track & Field at Michigan Invitational

On Feb. 8, the women's and men's track & field teams will compete at the Michigan Invitational in Ann Arbor. This all-day event will feature some of the best talent from around the region, and EMU athletes will be ready to put on a show.

Swimming & Diving vs Senior Extravaganza

The swimming and diving team returns to Ypsilanti on Feb. 8 for their Senior Extravaganza meet at 1 p.m. This is a great chance to watch the team in action as they honor their senior athletes and compete against top competitors.

Men's Basketball vs Old Dominion

Later on Feb. 8, the men's basketball team will take on Old Dominion in a 2 p.m. home game in Ypsilanti. The Eagles want to defend their home court and continue their strong season with another big win.

Women's Basketball at Georgia State

On the same day, the women's basketball team will travel to Atlanta, Georgia, for a 2 p.m. matchup against Georgia State. This road game will be challenging as the Eagles aim to secure a crucial victory.

Lacrosse vs San Diego State

The lacrosse team faces off against San Diego State at noon in Ypsilanti on Feb. 9. It's sure to be an exciting matchup as the Eagles take on one of the top teams in the region.

Gymnastics at Western Michigan

Later that day, the gymnastics team will travel to Kalamazoo for a 1 p.m. match against Western Michigan. The Eagles will want to continue their strong road performances and secure a big win in this MAC competition.

With so much to look forward to, ensure you don't miss any action! Stay connected with The Eastern Echo for all the latest news, scores, and updates on EMU athletics.

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Men's basketball drops second straight game, slipping below .500 in MAC play

Hugh Thorp
Sports Reporter

The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team dropped their second consecutive game on the road Saturday afternoon against the Western Michigan University Broncos, 61-54.

The loss drops the Eagles to 10-11 overall and 4-5 in Mid-American Conference play. It is the first time EMU has been under .500 in conference play since January 18, when they were 2-3. After the result, they are still tied for fifth in league play.

The game started heavily in favor of Western Michigan. In the first 13 minutes of play, the Broncos had the advantage, being up 18-7 early. After that, Eastern Michigan got right back into the game. They went on a 10-3 run over the next four minutes, which helped Eastern Michigan trail by only five, 23-18 at the break. The Green and White shot only 6-24 from the field (25%) in the first half.

Eastern Michigan was solid to start the second half, and their shooting woke up big time. They could even take the lead at one point, 31-28, with 13:30 to play. This was their first contest lead, and at the halfway point of the half, they were up 41-39.

From here on, though, the Eagles noticeably struggled. They only scored 13 points in the last 10 minutes. The first five minutes saw the Broncos go on a 12-4 run to take a six-point lead, 51-45. The Eagles' defense made some key stops and scored late to cut the lead to within one with 1:51 to play.

Da'Sean Nelson (Toledo, Ohio/Robert S. Rogers/Kilgore College/DePaul) made the first basket of this run, an and-one to make it 51-47. He made the three-throw, and it was a three-point game. The Broncos had one field goal to make it 53-48 before EMU made a second-chance tip-in by Nelson. The ensuing possession saw a Western Michigan turnover in which Eastern Michigan could draw a foul.

Jalin Billingsley (Cleveland, Ohio/Lutheran East/Georgetown) made two free throws as the game was cut to one, 53-52.

After that, Western had the advantage, going on a 6-0 run to give them a 59-52 lead with time running out. They would ultimately win the game and join the Eagles as one of three teams at 4-5.

Because both offenses struggled considerably, individual performances were also down. The Eagles had two players score in double digits: Nelson, who had 20 points, and Christian Henry (Chicago, Illinois/The Skill Factory/Panola College), who had 12 points. Nelson was over 20 for the seventh time this season and the first time in four games. Henry also totaled five assists in addition to his 12 points.

Other performances worth noting for Eastern Michigan include Nelson's 11 rebounds and Billingsley's 10 rebounds. The 10 rebounds tied a career-high for Billingsley, and

Nelson's 11 rebounds were two away from a career-high.

Despite the loss, Eastern Michigan outrebounded the Broncos 38-36. The 38 rebounds are the fourth most Eastern has had in a game this year.

Road to Cleveland

Eastern Michigan is now 4-5 in Mid-American Conference play. As of 6:30 p.m. ET on February 1, it is in a three-way tie for fifth place with Kent State and Western Michigan. Behind them are Ball State and Central Michigan, whose games are yet to be finalized today. The top eight teams will go to Cleveland for the Mid-American Conference tournament.

Up Next, Eastern Michigan returns to the George Gervin GameAbove Center Tuesday night, February 4, to take on the Kent State Golden Flashes and the right to go to 5-5 in the conference. Tip-off is set for 6:30 p.m. The game will be streaming on ESPN+ and can be listened to on WEMU 89.1 FM.

Women's basketball celebrates Alumni, Play4Kay event, but falls to Toledo

Caleb Henderson
Sports Reporter

This week was not your average Saturday at the George Gervin GameAbove Center.

The Eastern Michigan women's basketball team recognized a few prominent alumni to play for the college in the afternoon.

It also sported new alternate pink jerseys in honor of the school's annual Play4Kay game. They recognized National Women and Girls in Sports Day.

Despite all this, the Toledo Rockets came into the Eagles' house and blitzed the home team. In the second half, they

outscored Eastern Michigan 43-25 to claim a dominant 77-49 win on the road.

While the Eagles cut the Rockets' lead to as low as eight midway through the third quarter, Toledo went on a 26-6 run between the latter stages of the frame into the opening portion of the fourth quarter to put the game out of reach once and for all.

The win improved the Rockets to 15-5 (7-3 MAC) on the campaign, while Eastern Michigan fell to 1-19 (0-10 MAC), their eighth consecutive loss to Toledo.

"If you can't put consistent minutes together and a consistent 40 minutes of focus and fight and execution of your game plan against a team like Toledo,

it's going to be hard," Eagles head coach Sahar Nusseibeh said.

"The moments of fight are great - that has to become more consistent," she added.

Sisi Eleko (Montreal, Quebec/New Hope Academy/Canisius) continued her dazzling start to the season with 16 points and 12 rebounds to lead the team, her conference-leading 11th double-double in 2024-25, while Olivia Smith (Fort Wayne, Indiana/South Side) also stepped up to add 14 points to Eastern Michigan's tally.

As mentioned earlier, this game also served as Eastern Michigan's annual Play4Kay event - a tribute to Kay Yow and the Kay Yow Cancer Fund. Yow was one of the most successful coaches

in women's basketball history before her untimely death from breast cancer in 2009.

"[Yow's] entire legacy was about, essentially, doing good for others," coach Nusseibeh said when asked about what Eastern Michigan's Play4Kay game meant to the school.

"[The Kay Yow Cancer Fund] is a tremendous foundation that not only raises awareness, but it raises money to hopefully find a cure," she added.

Next time out, the Eagles will be on the road once more - a trip to Oxford, Ohio, on the cards to face Miami University on Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 7 p.m. Viewers can stream the game live on ESPN+.



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'Companion' is a unique, powerful thriller

Mariam Fakhreddine
Review Columnist

“Companion,” directed by Drew Hancock, was released in theaters on Jan. 31. This thrilling sci-fi film is full of plot twists and robots. It stars Sophie Thatcher as Iris and Jack Quaid as Josh. Their intense scenes together are exciting and suspenseful.

“Companion” follows a couple who goes away for the weekend at a secluded lake house. Iris goes to this lake house with Josh to meet up with his friends. This mysterious weekend soon becomes a bloodbath between Iris and Josh’s friends. Iris turns out to be this subservient robot built for human companionship. She possesses real human emotions but is there primarily to do what Josh says, which takes a turn for the worst.

Highs

The acting of Thatcher as Iris is impressive. She shows genuine human-like emotions while she is a robot. Her character development is incredible; she is this shy girlfriend who turns into a brave woman willing to do anything for her freedom. Thatcher’s portrayal is suspenseful, and she does everything she can to be expected as all she ever wanted was to love Josh, but it turned into a betrayal as she was seen as just an object. The moment she figures out she is a robot is an intense scene with strong emotions of betrayal and heartbreak.

Quaid’s acting as Josh is full of manipulation and done well. He wants to be in control of everything. He is the true villain in this film and it does not fail to capture his arrogance. His character is full of plot twists. He seems like a loving boyfriend when, in reality, he is selfish and manipulative.

The thrilling aspect mixed with sci-fi was captured well. It is a unique plot that captures the

truth behind AI’s power. The plot is a highlight; Iris tries to escape this world of hell.



it is suspenseful and keeps the audience on their toes. The film contains this intense killing spree as

The dark humor portrayed in the film is a highlight. The scenes that captured the meet-

cute between Iris and Josh were hilarious. They showed her meeting this man in the store who dropped all these oranges, creating this humorous sensation. The interactions between Josh and Iris became more intense, which led to these dark, witty comments. Josh’s insecurities gave the film a dark humor aspect.

The friends in “Companion” have a mixture of different personalities. Kat (Megan Suri) is portrayed as a toxic friend who is selfish and malicious. Patrick (Lukas Gage) is the loving boyfriend of Eli (Harvey Guillen). Their relationship is humorous due to the scene of their meet-cute, which gives the movie a lighter aspect.

Lows

“Companion” has minimal lows, considering how unique it is from other thrillers. The main low is Josh’s motives. He is a toxic man who will do anything to gain control. He has no remorseful emotions. He wants to destroy Iris. The other low is the lack of information on why Josh resents the world. Kat’s portrayal in the film is also lacking. She is involved in this toxic plan, but her motives are unclear.

The film’s tone can be questionable at times, considering how much it goes from exhilarating to comedic. This might confuse the audience and cause them to fail to comprehend the dark, humorous elements of the film.

Verdict

“Companion” is worth watching because it is intriguing and suspenseful throughout. The characters’ acting is on point and compelling, adding to the intensity of the plot and scenes.

Rating: 8 out of 10

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.

EMU THEATRE SCHEDULE 2025

The Rocky Horror Show - February 13-16, 2025

Suggested for mature audiences only. Traveling to visit their former science teacher, naïve sweethearts Brad & Janet experience car trouble and stumble upon the eerie home of Dr. Frank-N-Furter. Trapped inside with strange, scantily clad Transylvanians, Brad and Janet find themselves at the mercy of Frank and his motley crew. No one’s lives or libidos will ever be the same after this stormy, sexy night where impulses are acted upon, secrets are revealed and lessons are learned.

Cause Play - April 3-6*, 2025

School Matinees April 7 & 8* Suggested for ages 9+. *Accessible with ASL. Journey back to 1996, when students Zuvi, Zipper and Aaron meet at an after-school Cosplay Club at Southwest Academy Magnet Middle School in Detroit. Encouraged by their teacher, the trio reluctantly comes together to create costumes & identities for an upcoming Comic Con. As their friendship grows they discover new things about each other, including some very surprising powers. The young heroes learn to work as a team to tackle a variety of problems, including catching crazy stray cats, defeating monsters, and facing fears.

The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus - April 11 & 12, 2025

Suggested for ages 5+. 8-year-old Sheila & her friends feel like they’re melting under New Mexico’s summer sun and are so bored! To beat the heat and have something to do, the pals decide to create a fabulous fort made of the junk around them. The end result gets the attention of a very special coyote - one who walks, talks, and transports Sheila and her friends deep within the desert. The five friends embark on the adventure of a lifetime, learning about the impact humans have on the environment and becoming inspired to help all those who live within the beautiful desert landscape.

'Back in Action' is action-packed and hilarious

Mariam Fakhreddine
Review Columnist

“Back in Action,” directed by Seth Gordon, is trending on Netflix at the time of publication. This film features Cameron Diaz as Emily and Jamie Foxx as Matt, a CIA agent. It is full of action and humorous scenes that keep the audience engaged.

Emily and Matt are former CIA agents who decide to leave the agency because it could put their family at risk. However, they are pulled back into this dangerous career because their enemies believe they have a secret key. After their last mission, it was thought that they were dead, but their identities were exposed after a fight in a club.

Highs

The sequence of events in “Back in Action” are entertaining and intriguing, considering the movie’s beginning includes an intense mission. This specific type of scene can catch the audience’s attention. The CGI in the scene was impressive and full of adrenaline. The fighting scenes portrayed by Diaz as Emily were impressive and skillful. She shows her character’s strength and bravery as an agent while pregnant.

The connection between Matt and Emily is a highlight due to their care for one another. Their goal is to protect their family no matter the cost. The transition from being CIA agents to normal parents without this dangerous job is hilarious. The scenes of Emily bickering with her daughter Alice (McKenna Roberts) show their intense mother-daughter relationship. Emily’s goal as a mother is to protect her children and lighten her relationship with her daughter.



The film’s plot is a high, considering how thrilling it can be to run away from terrorists and/or mercenaries. This takes the audience on an exciting adventure as we hope to keep Alice and Leo (Rylan

Jackson), Emily’s other child, safe. The plot twists in the film are unexpected and show that Matt and Emily cannot trust anyone from their past.

The grandmother Ginny (Glenn Close) was hilarious. She is this british former agent. She is sarcastic and has an intense relationship with her daughter, Emily. The amount of bravery and assertiveness she shows can be seen in her daughter. Their relationship is rocky, but it eases as the movie continues. This shows how one event can change the perspectives of Emily’s beliefs regarding her mother.

Lows

“Back in Action” has minimal lows, but it has a more predictable ending. This can take away from the audience’s attention and can disengage. The lack of knowledge regarding the secret key is low because it needs to show what it can do. Some scenes describe it but provide more to understand why it is so dangerous.

Alice’s attitude at the beginning is low because she is a hard-headed teen who doesn’t get along with her mother. She makes things more complicated for her mother rather than just trusting her. This can get annoying throughout the film because it is repetitive.

Verdict

“Back in Action” is entertaining with a simple plot but does keep the audience thrilled. The action scenes are intense, and the CGI is impressive throughout. There is a cliffhanger that leaves the audience in question for a sequel.

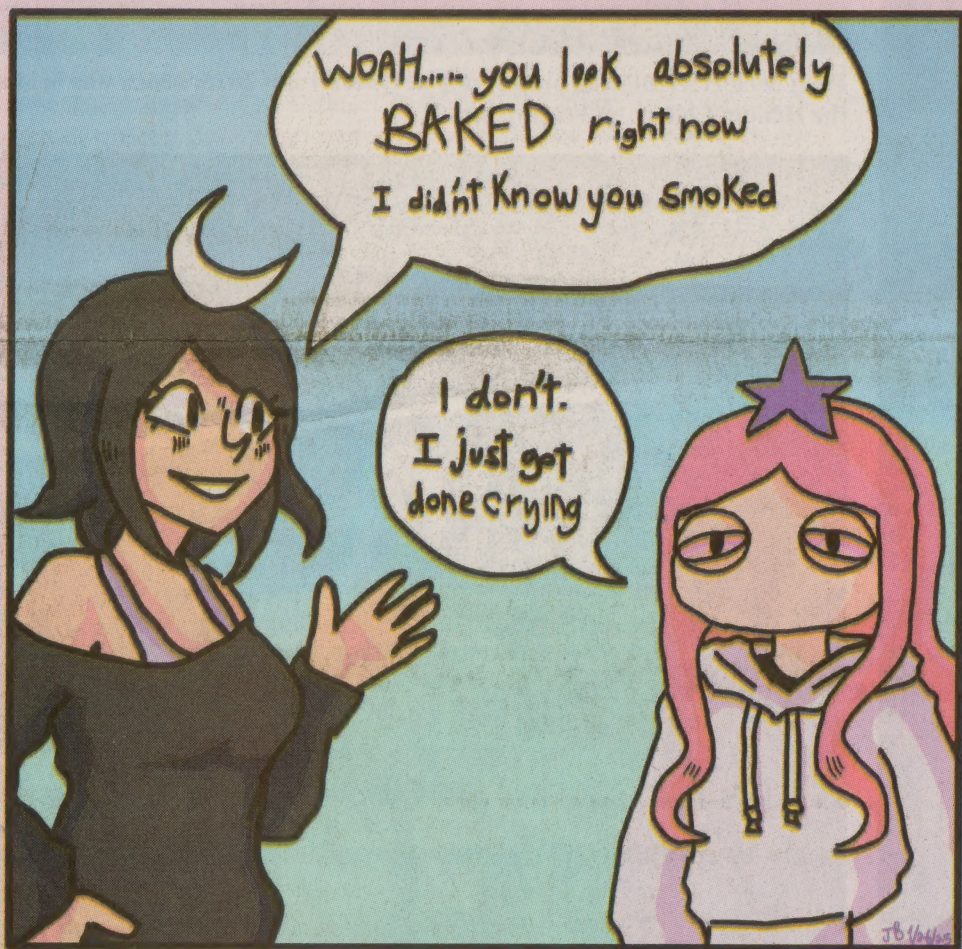
Rating: 6.5 out of 10

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.

Four Years...?
FunkyLOaf
Comics Artist



Post-Cry Eyes
Julia Bartlett
Comics Artist



Scoop says...



More Comics Here! The Echo Newsletter!



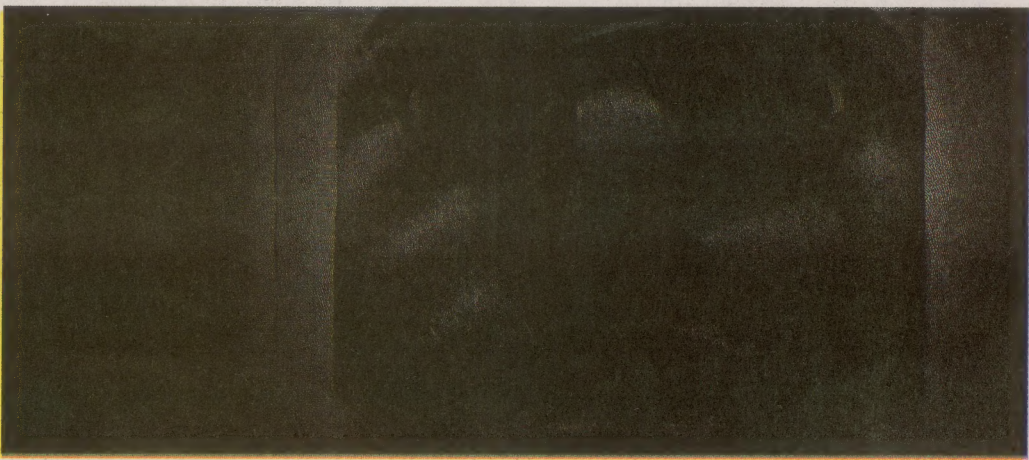
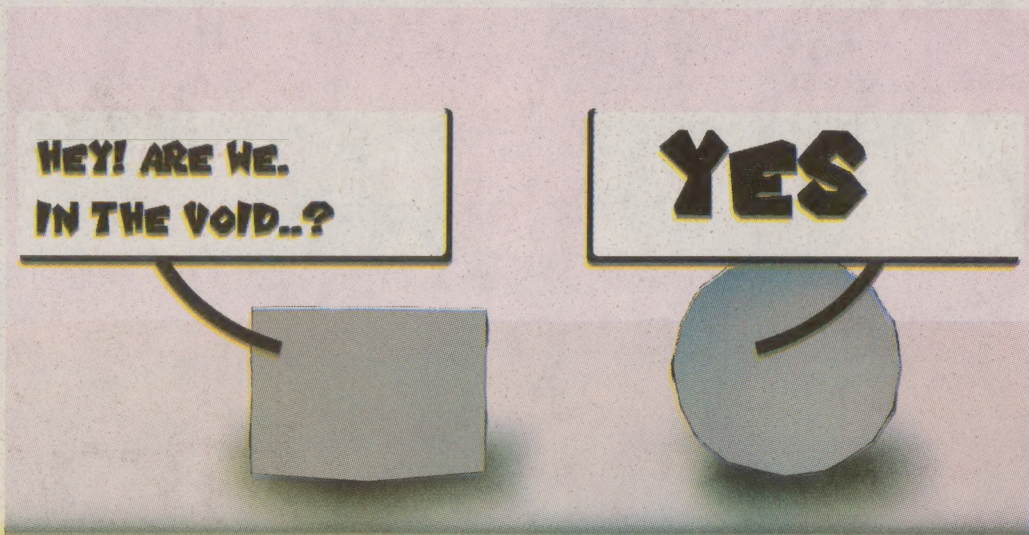
Voice Acting...
Rylee Curley
Design Chief



Emotional Support
FunkyLOaf
Comics Artist



The Void
Yiri
Comics Artist



Queer Talks

Photo story by Kaleb Stanley



Drag performer Cavity performing at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.



Victoria Huguley presents on the TV Show "Interview with a Vampire" and about how it relates to the history of queer culture at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.



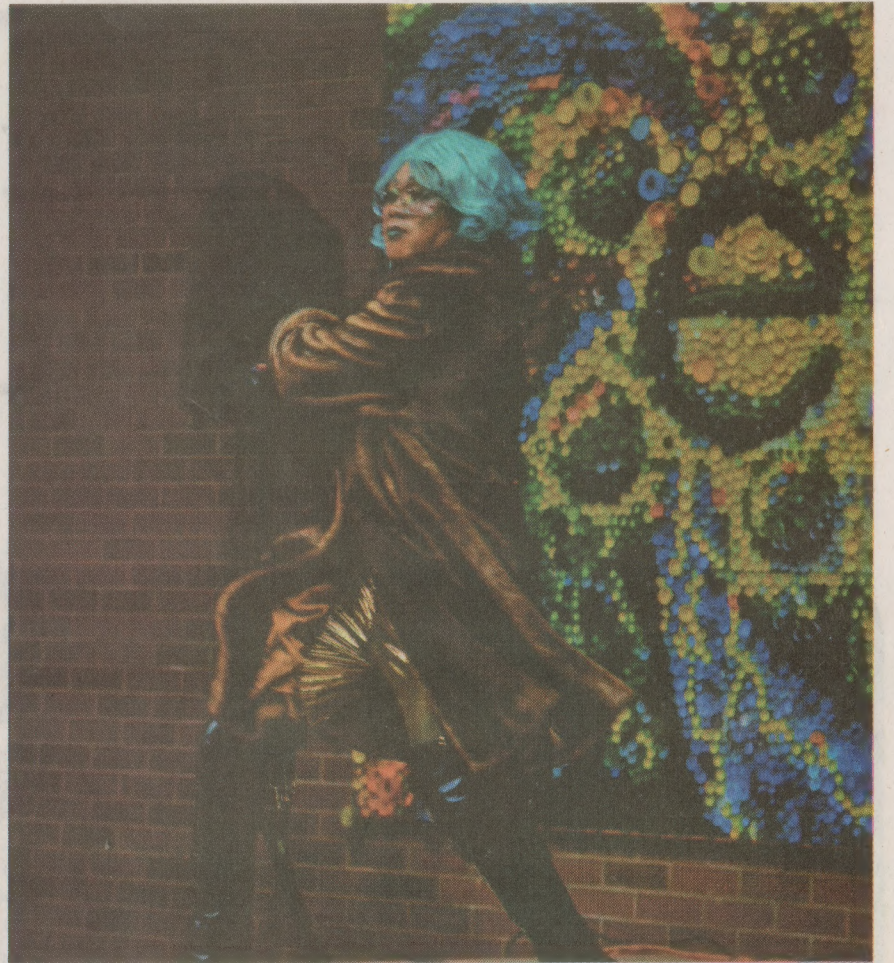
Drag performer Virgil Ciel performing at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.



Drag performer Blonski performing at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.



Nick Clark speaking at the Keynote address and panel at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.



Drag performer Xiao Ghossty performing at Queer Talks 2025, which was held at the Honors College on Friday, Jan. 31.